

## Interview with Catherine Adams Peltier

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CATHERINE ADAMS PELTIER

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PELTIER: I have to laugh. I've lived a suburban existence absolutely everywhere we lived. You know, house, car, kids and school. It's remarkable how that translates now.

*Q: I think that's interesting that you should say that because that's one of my theories that I've developed that in spite of the 1972 directive and in spite of the Foreign Service Associate proposal and in spite of the ...*

PELTIER: Oh, well, no, you and I are going to be on different sides of the fence. Finish your sentence.

*Q: Okay. Now that has changed obviously.*

PELTIER: Uh-huh.

*Q: But basically what we have to contend with within the Foreign Service remains the same.*

PELTIER: Oh, yeah.

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*Q: Because what I did was take some of the quotes from an article, 1962 Foreign Service Journal "Abigail Adams' First Post" Did you ever see it?*

PELTIER: I must have done at some point.

*Q: Ages and ages and ages ago. Well, I took just some of the things that, a man named Brown wrote it, and I took some of the things that he covered in the article to show the changes and similarities. Where would you like to start? How do you feel about the associate proposal and compensation for spouse, bilateral agreements ... ?*

PELTIER: I have to laugh. The only reason I know much about it is that in New Delhi, what do you call it? Not a symposium, more like a panel discussion was held one evening. And on the panel, were there five of us? There was the CLO coordinator, there was a lady Foreign Service Officer, there was a Foreign Service secretary, and there I was, a spouse who had never worked and who had never tried to work. I've forgotten what the fifth point of view. Maybe there were only four of us. And my basic conclusion, having to read all that stuff for that panel, was that this is far too good to be true. Who's going to pay me to do what I've been doing all my life, what I was brought up to do for free?

It isn't done. But that's because, in my own mind, I never was trained in any particular field which could be compensated anywhere. And perhaps that was the fifth point of view, somebody with a career that she'd given up to... It would be logical. Whether it was arts or humanities or medicine I don't remember, but it was ... well, given the realities of money and so forth, we didn't see that it was going to go very far. And we concluded at the end of the evening that we hoped more emphasis and more pressure would be put on countries to make employment opportunities available, or make it possible to look for them. Now one's visa just shuts the door and to have some bilateral agreement that we could at least look and I don't think you are going to find too many Foreign Service spouses displacing too many employees in an overseas country. But this is what is always fed back: well, we

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can't have all of you ladies in the job field. You'll put our people out of work. Not at what they pay. The argument goes on forever.

*Q: That's interesting because I was CLO coordinator in Trinidad.*

PELTIER: Oh, were you?

*Q: My last post, and I twice gathered my flock together, once on the Eagleburger compensation thing and we sent a cable back on that. And then once on the Foreign Service Associate proposal and they said exactly what your group said — explore the possibilities for spouse employment in the country. Make it the responsibilities of the countries that you're in to hire you, not the Department of State, not Congress to... No Congress is going to appropriate funds for, as you said, for you and me to do what we've done for years and years and years.*

PELTIER: Right. Or even to do more. Say you're a very good midwife or a trained researcher who could train other people or help other people find out about this kind of thing [in the] country they're in. Instead of shutting the door, leave it unlocked, please? You don't have to help me find a job, but don't say I can't work at all. And I think an awful lot happier initially. I have been saying this all summer to various people who say, "Well, will you work now that both kids are going to be in upper school?" and so forth. And I said it was very interesting when we went to London in 1977 and I arrived with two preschoolers and at that point the consul general's wife had us all in to coffee and she tried to do this about every six weeks, and this is '77, so she said "of course I can't require you to come, of course if you're busy. But if you feel the need to come and chat this is what we're going to do." And we did it for some years, and it petered out. And then a coffee was held about six weeks before I left for the section. Three wives turned up, even though we'd been attracting 15 or 20 for years before. So the three of us were thinking, "My goodness. What's happened?" And we all sat down and we thought, "Well, this one is working, and

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this one is working, and this one is in school, and this one's in school," And so forth. The number of working spouses had just ballooned incredibly. And it was such a transition.

*Q: I take it we had a bilateral agreement with England?*

PELTIER: No, these people were working in the embassy. That embassy issues almost more visas than any other embassy in the whole world. I'm sure you know that. And a lot of these ladies just wanted to get out of the house to the extent that they would take PIT positions, the part time, [intermittent], temporary, etc. And they were literally opening envelopes around a big table, taking out the visa and the passport, making sure everything was in order and putting it in a stack. Six hours a day. My husband used to tease and say, "Why don't you go get one now that you have this time?" And I said "I'm to pay a sitter so I can sit in a room with no windows and do that kind of thing? No, thank you." But [I watched] my generation grow up, grow out of preschool and the rest. An awful lot of people grew up with the idea: you're going to work, you're going to support yourself and they found it terribly, terribly difficult to be put back in the position of an old-fashioned spouse whose responsibility was the home, the children, and her husband's entertaining. They just thought, "Well, that's not the way it's done. That's not what I'm going to do." And I don't know if it's a difference of education or what. I found myself like a dinosaur with no ambition to do anything except mind the house, pick it up and move it every now and again, do the little bit of entertaining — that's been very strange because there's been very little entertainment responsibility with Alec's particular job.

*Q: I was going to ask — what was his position?*

PELTIER: Well, you're going to get the long answer. He spent about 18, 17 years as a consular officer, issuing visas, and therefore entertaining wound around the usual visiting firemen and then two or three times a year we had a big do, usually put on by his boss, for the police chiefs, doctors and psychiatrists, and all the support personnel without whom you cannot take care of etc., etc. All those nice people at the airport that help you out

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with getting the crazies on the plane and things like that. And so I did my share of deviled eggs and brownie baking and that kind of thing and showing up and smiling. But only once did I ever have to put one on by myself and that was interesting too. Now he has switched specialties in the late '70s in London. The visa operation was so big that it was an obvious candidate for computerization. And Alec got kind of fascinated, first, with the word processing, which turned out all those letters that everybody had to get, and then with the computers and he built a Heathkit at home in the back. We had one of those dandy houses in Highgate with three stories. He went up to his garret. It arrived in a box like this. Little teeny pieces. Anyway he puts it all together and learns to program and cope with that system. And at the same time in the office he was helping to write the main, the big, program called NIVCAPS, which manages visas. Beyond that I can't tell you; we'd need him in the room. And after that he came back in '81 to the Department and went into special consular services and I forget. Oh, Office of Consular Services. The State Department meanwhile, was thinking, the wheels grind slowly, and decided they wanted their own computer specialist to install computers at the posts around the world because a Foreign Service Officer knows what you're talking about if you're saying I need this kind of economic reporting capability. I need this kind of money management because he's got a generalist. He's got a little bit of everything and speaks the same language. So they gave him a six month course at FSI and sent him out to New Delhi where he arrived and the computer was in the basement. Basically now he's a systems specialist and now having installed and trained and so forth a system in New Delhi, we're on our way to Mexico City where he'll have a regional job overseeing the entire ARA area. People who run into problems will call him up and say, "I can't do it. What am I doing wrong?" And all that, and he will paddle around to help.

*Q: He'll get a lot of calls I'm sure.*

PELTIER: So that's all of Central, South America and the Caribbean, I believe.

*Q: Will you ever see him?*

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PELTIER: Well, this is the question. He's been home for twenty years and I have to laugh. After Vietnam, which was a whole different way of life, he was just like a banker. He was home every night at six o'clock, so he's going to be traveling. But that's the long answer to the short question, there's no entertaining involved in that because the only local contact maintains something of an adversarial relationship of repairs and spares and problems with all of that. So we found ourselves making our own sort of inroads in finding our own contacts.

*Q: Which in a way is sort of fun, really.*

PELTIER: Well, you're certainly free. You don't have to have [mmph, mmph] those people. You have who you please.

*Q: The nice thing about being retired — you entertain who you want.*

PELTIER: And you can really sit down and talk to people.

*Q: Well, that kind of answered one of my questions. You weren't ever really pressed and out of pocket and feeling overwhelmed by representation duties.*

PELTIER: Never. Just because there weren't very many.

*Q: Have you ever been overwhelmed by the difficulty of finding a house?*

PELTIER: No, this is the only time it really was a terrible, terrible experience was coming back to Washington in 1981. We'd been overseas for fourteen years, and every single post without exception, perhaps because they were in Asia and London, had housing provided. And having been brought up to take things as they come, I had never been displeased with the housing. Hey! Here it was and they'd take you off the airplane and they'd take you in a nice air-conditioned car, put you in the house. And yeah, it needs painting, but it has furniture, decent furniture. Somebody's brought in some pots and pans for the first few

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weeks. You can function. As I say, if you can scramble an egg, you can live. And even in London, or perhaps especially in London, where the housing market was so out of sight, we were popped into a flat. And there we just didn't have the space. There's only the four of us but we do take up an awful lot of room. And so in the end we bought a house, and I won't go through that long story, but we got the money over and bought a house and had a very good time. It was a rambly, shambly thing, rather like this, vertical. And the housing has never, ever been a problem. We went to New Delhi, popped us in a house, isn't that nice? Mexico City apparantly has built up a stock of rental housing because it's more economical to take long leases. We will be shown houses.

*Q: I saw some of them and they're very, very nice.*

PELTIER: Oh, good.

*Q: Have you ever been terrifically out of pocket to put a house in order — a government house that is provided to you — and you don't particularly like the rugs, like this or that or the other thing? Do you live with it or do you go out of pocket to have it just as you wish it?*

PELTIER: I'm too adaptable. Perhaps mentally I know it's temporary, and we have always had a reasonable, oh, what do they call it, a cushions and curtains allowance. You can change the pillow covers you can change the curtains and so I have done that in every post. And I have to laugh, I don't know if you know Jamie Taub, but we got to know each other briefly before we both went out to India, and she arrived after I did. So, I knew where the shops were, and I said, "Jamie, can I take you around and show you where?" She said, "Oh, that's right I have to do that again. I've had red houses and blue houses and green houses and yellow houses. I think I'll try lavender." And she did. She pulled it off. It was remarkable. But it was much the way I felt. Let's see, very dark house, I guess we'll be pink. You know. But there's always been enough variety available where we were and enough money to spend on it, so I've not been grossly out of pocket.

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*Q: I think our last house that we moved into, I managed to do the whole thing for one hundred dollars. The embassy furnished everything, simply because I just wanted to see if I could do it. I didn't like the house anyway, so I thought, "Why?" It didn't matter. It was only for a short time.*

PELTIER: Three years, possibly four. And the next person is going to through it away anyway.

*Q: And I think if you have your own home to come back to, it makes a difference.*

PELTIER: I can't tell you the difference that has made mentally, sort of before home and after. Perhaps the mistake of buying a home in London was that it took about a year to recover from moving from there. Because we'd started to put down roots. We had a house. We went to home shows. We worried about rates and taxes and police and traffic. And kept turning down this nice Pakistani who kept coming around every October to sign us up to vote, things like that. And we kept saying we're not citizens, but he kept saying but you're householders. I'm sorry, we're not going to vote. Moving from there was very hard. Now we have a house in McLean and it's there and it's rented.

So going to New Delhi was no problem mentally and packing up and going to Mexico City, because there is a home, and that's made an enormous difference. Nobody tells you these things.

*Q: No, and they should. That's one of the things that they should tell you. They should also tell you to save and buy as soon as you can and don't wait. The housing is only going up.*

PELTIER: Well, we debated in 1970, when small houses, starter houses, average houses, nice townhouses were in the \$50,000 - \$55,000 range, and we were only there for ten months language training. And we knew that everybody had such terrible horror stories of renting the house out and having poor agents or worse tenants and the rest of it. And better the money goes in the market and we don't have the headache because we



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honestly don't know when we will be back. And again it took eleven, twelve years from that time.

*Q: We were out fourteen years before we came back too. And that was something of a shock to have to find a place. My husband hates to commute and insisted on walking to work, and this was just about the outer limit for walking to work, he could walk in. Well, it's about two miles, around about half an hour if he got all the lights right, twenty-five minutes.*

Looking at some of the things Abigail Adams, by the way, what is your relationship to her?

PELTIER: She's my ever-so-many greats, and I think it's seven, grandmother. I mean it's absolutely direct. She's my father's mother's, no, my father's mother's father...great-great-grandmother. I think it works out to seven or eight. There's still the Adams in the name.

*Q: Some of the things that were mentioned in the article was her fondness for Britain, because of her ability to speak English and her distress at not being able to speak French. She said she felt rude and silent in society because of lack of fluency and feeling alienated through language. And the despair of making servants understand, something we've all been through, isn't it?*

PELTIER: Absolutely. There is nothing truer. I'm faced this time with learning Spanish, which I can read but not speak. And it's as you say you're introduced to these thoroughly delightful people and you know they have a lot to say, and you have a lot to say, but they mentally put you on a par with their four-year-old who can say a couple of interesting things, but they'd much rather get down to what Gertrude's been doing. So you have to overcome that and it's very difficult to do that and as I say, we won't worry about making the servants understand, and making the breadman understand. It hasn't changed.

*Q: Perhaps it was one of the reasons why it was so hard to leave England too, because you were... I always loved going up there from Africa, over from Holland.*

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PELTIER: Oh! You're home, you really are home.

*Q: And let's see what else. Oh, separation of family, that's a recurring lament, a recurring theme in just interview after interview after interview. And of course, she was separated from John Quincy for five or six years. Have you ever had any?*

PELTIER: Vietnam. Alec's first post was Vietnam. And he got a bottle of wine from his A-100 course classmates for getting the most rotten assignment, because he wasn't married at the time, so he couldn't say I'm married, he had to say no. We were married about ten days after he got the assignment. But there again, it couldn't have happened at a better time. We had no kids. And there was the safe haven program, where, ultimately, let's see, he left at Thanksgiving time, and the following April, right after Martin Luther King was shot, I moved out to Manila and lived there in more than oriental splendor. We used to say we were the best kept Mistresses in all of Asia. Separate maintenance allowance. All of our husbands decided they needed the absolute most money they could possibly get. We were provided housing. We were provided medical care. And we were provided sort of support. There was an office to look after us. We were considered social pariahs, all these unattached women had a terrible reputation, thanks to the activities of various members of our group. But the thing that really chafed most of my friends, who were all under twenty-five, we had all been married for less than, well, for less than a year when we got out there. And could not work, the visa precluded work and these were all most, I think there was one other gal like me who had never worked, and so knew what to do with herself. And there naturally was an American Women's Association, and naturally had all kinds of worthy little projects, so we dove into worthy little projects and had a fine time. And the ones who were beating their heads against the wall, figured out how to teach at the American school even though they didn't have degrees and this kind of thing. But it was a very funny way to live, because if you were lucky and your husband had a decent boss, he was home a week every six weeks. And you dropped out of sight completely. We were so young and shy of newly married people, it was like a two year honeymoon.

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And that had its own weird consequences when you dropped out of sight. I mean there was one gal who was very social and her husband came home and she wanted to have a little party and introduce him and the fact that every single one of her fourteen friends was women didn't bother her, where we all sat and didn't know what to say. I think I was twenty. There's this husband who you don't dare even smile at in case his wife is jealous. Oh, it was a scream. But as I say that was two very interesting years. And then we went from that extreme to the opposite, came back for language training in 1970, in January for Hindi, because having been sent to this, to Vietnam, Alec was then asked, "Well what do you want? You can have anything." And he said, "Fine, teach me Hindi, and send me to New Delhi." So they taught the two of us Hindi. I mean why shouldn't I go along, I was doing nothing else. And they sent him to Bombay, where you don't use Hindi. I won't go into that. And so we were together 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Which is again the flip side of the other. How the marriage survived, God only knows. And we discovered Fairfax County's adult education, so we each had an evening out, and he learned bridge, which he thought was necessary. I did some oil painting. It got us out of the house. But...

*Q: You were in the same class.*

PELTIER: Yes, there were only three of us, he, I, and one other person — Hindi being somewhat less than popular.

*Q: The one time my husband and I studied Portuguese at the same time. We were in different classes.*

PELTIER: That's very valuable.

*Q: We had something that the other didn't know — the intimate details at the end of the day. Well, I'm just loving your attitude, because I think there are any number of people out there who have this attitude and I think it may not be a silent majority, but it certainly is a silent number of Foreign Service wives who, I don't know how you feel about it. I don't*

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*know howmuch you've been here. AAFSW is predominantly retired and older foreign born spouses.*

PELTIER: I wondered. I just joined. I always felt so guilty that I never joined. Then I always thought, well, I'm overseas and overseas doesn't seem to do much but round up books for the Bookfair. And then the kids are now old enough for AWAL (Around the World in a Lifetime), so I thought it's time to join and see if big posts, like Mexico City can't have their own chapter. I'm sure somebody has begun something. Some work has to be done.

*Q: Something must be being done through the CLO office.*

PELTIER: Probably.

*Q: And I suppose AWAL and the foreign born spouse networks are, they've really been operating separately, I would think.*

PELTIER: They all have their own worries. I'm all for community building. I would love to help anybody who needs it, but to be perfectly frank, I don't speak the languages involved. And if somebody who does can help out, I think it's a, you know somebody one step ahead reaching behind and helping the next person up in that case. It's a very strong network. The expression I think of is one that was said to me by an ex-overseas wife. I don't think she was Foreign Service, but she'd been overseas for donkey's years. She lives up behind us in McLean. And she did something, I've forgotten what it was, something really nice and I said how can I repay you and she said, oh, bread upon the waters. Don't worry you'll help somebody else someday. And I thought isn't that true because somebody helps you when you move in and takes you everywhere and finds playmates for the kids and brings coloring books or a pot of coffee or whatever. And unless you do exactly that when they move you turn around and find you do it for the person behind you.

*Q: Do you find that is still happening?*

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PELTIER: Oh, yes, very, very much. And I think it's because it is something I have always done in every post is to do exactly that. Be a newcomer helper, a sponsor or a big sister, whatever they call it in the various posts. From Manila, where I was in a safe haven, on up and it made an awful lot of difference. Especially in London, where we arrived and I had been warned this is a huge post, you speak English, you will have no problems, therefore, nobody will help you with your problems. And we arrived, and again I could make it a long story, but I won't because we'd run out of time, with two little kids and no food in the flat, an hour from the embassy and an hour-and-a-half from the school, where the child was enrolled. So Alec and I got ourselves squared away with that, I don't think he went to the office for the first three days. I realized something has got to be done, so made up a sponsorship program for the consular section, but as I say, that's one thing I've always done.

*Q: I was going to ask you a question, now what was it? Oh, the women who feel that they have to work, when I was CLO, I enjoyed very much finding out what made the wheels go around in the embassy. And I enjoyed my two years. And I was originally offered, you know, answering the switchboard, filing in the visa section. And so I drew myself up to my fullest height, marched down to FLO, and said send a cable that neither job meets my interest nor my qualifications. And they were so stunned by having someone who didn't jump at the first opportunity to do whatever, no matter how mundane it was. And I did feel that the FLO job, since we had at times 100 per cent spouse employment at that embassy, and it was my husband's last post and I thought I might as well ride the crest of the wave and take the FLO job and if I did the volunteer things there's no one out there to do them with me. Nobody to play with. I wonder if there's any kind of orientation we can give these women to show them that the fun, the interest is out there in the country. I can't believe that the money you make filing visa papers, does that make the difference between your son going to Harvard and the University of Oklahoma? Does it really?*

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PELTIER: I don't know about that. I think it's more a state of mind. Because this is going to start sounding very, very as if I have great big plates going down my back like a dinosaur, but the idea of, it's a very old-fashioned idea and it's rooted in a particular part of society, let the men worry about the money, there will be the money if you marry the right kind of man. Your job is home and family and looking after the rest of the community. So, that you needn't worry about supporting yourself, if you and your parents do the right thing by you and find a decent guy to take care of you. Now, if you don't, well, my dear, then somethings got to be done. You'll probably have to be a secretary or teacher or something like that. But the whole idea of a career, a financial career, well that's for the odd bright ones.

*Q: Well even if you work as a visa clerk, I suppose the fact that such a significant number of people are divorced today, and these women feel that they need their careers, but if you work as a visa clerk, what qualification does that give you when you're faced with...*

PELTIER: Well, I had someone with completely the opposite point of view. I tried to explain to her where I was coming from and she said, well, you certainly can't think that in this day and age! Even marriages of thirty years standing dissolve. And I said, yeah, it happened in my own family. But then apparently if one has worked at anything, be it filing visas, be it answering the phone, apparently this opens up the opportunity for more employment because apparently somebody hiring looks at a resume of nothing, I've never been paid for anything and thinks, well, what can this person do? Because he is, probably he, measuring people financially and by experience.

*Q: Unfortunately that is what we are measured by.*

PELTIER: There it is. Having been, you're just kind of a blob that can't apply the calipers, you might be very valuable.

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*Q: How many people like you do you run into in the Service these days? Are you all alone?*

PELTIER: Almost all alone. It is funny, there are a few in Delhi and they tend to be older. They tend to be wives of Foreign Service Officers. And, there are so many varieties of people in an embassy but they tend to be wives of Foreign Service Officers. And they tend to have been overseas a lot and they tend to have started early, therefore, there was perhaps no chance to start a career. And on the other side, there are some people who have made careers out of their portable pursuits. They write, they photograph, they paint or whatever. And some of them teach and so sometimes they are helping out with the raffle, bazaar, or ball or whatever. A lot of times they're not. There are a few but we're a dying breed. And I've heard laments in both Bombay and Delhi that the American Women's Club as such is shrinking membershipwise and part of it is a lot of busy people working, and part of it is a smaller American presence in that particular country. Which strikes me as rather odd, but we've had our ups and downs. Basically the club doesn't meet the needs of somebody who is working all day. So it's shrinking.

*Q: Maybe that is what I was saying about AAFSW earlier. They did have a meeting recently, they do have a new president, and I think they are reassessing themselves as an organization. And it will be interesting to see what direction they go in and what they become.*

PELTIER: And what they become. We'll just have to take a look. I've never been to familiar with them, but there it is.

*Q: What I'm discovering in this interview, much to my delight, is that the similarities, because I have always maintained that there are certain givens in the Foreign Service. We move into a post, we are maybe a little antagonistic to the culture on arrival. When I arrived in Brazil, the northeast of Brazil, where everyone is short and dyes their hair black and wouldn't be caught dead with a gray strand. Even my husband's driver used to go*

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*to the barber and have the gray plucked from his hair because evidently that was less expensive than dying it. And then he'd touch up the temples. Well, I refuse to dye my hair for anyone and I do not and my taste does not run to loud, flamboyant colors and dripping gold chains, where Brazil has all these marvelous semi-precious stones, but the women don't wear. They wear gold brought in at extravagant cost from elsewhere. I never did get over the resentment that they thought I was a little peculiar. Because I was tall I could wear long, silky pajamas, you know, a number of black silky pants and lots of tops to go a long way. I think we all do that. I think we all experience that resentment.*

PELTIER: Well, I'm about to run into, and again it's South America, and I'm going to make it long. In 1976, Alec went to Santo Domingo from Barbados for a consular conference. And we left the two rug rats with a friend and I had a weeks vacation and I played tennis just everyday. And Santo Domingo is just made of amber and there's old forts and old churches, and Columbus' grave and all kinds of stuff to see. And the consular wives there made up a wonderful itinerary, and some of them took us shopping, and some of them took us to a church and wasn't this grand. And there was needless to say almost every night a stand up and screamer to meet people and while the men all did business, the women all did this. And about the third South American spouse I spoke to said the same thing of, no, I don't volunteer, I play bridge, I get my hair done, I go to tea parties, and, by the third time I was appalled, because I grew up in New England, with a New England background, from the age of twelve, I was dragged off to the hospital to make sandwiches and the rest of it. You have this time you owe it to the community. You certainly don't spend it on yourself. So I spoke to a wonderful French-American friend of mine who lives in Delhi, and she was moving too, you've been in South America, am I going to run in, head on, against this lack of what you might call the American volunteer spirit? Now, I realize that every culture is different, but I can only define it that way. It exists in England, it exists almost anywhere you go, even India. And she said, well I'll tell you, in Peru, she's a Catholic, I went on a ladies retreat in the Catholic Church, and Father whoever it was, said now ladies your duty to your husbands is to rest and be beautiful because you are the



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se#ora. And if you don't take care of yourself, he will leave you. And he said this almost as if you deserve it. Well, as I say, I look at your gray hair, I look at the wrinkles, you see how much I work... And I said, Claire, I'm in deep trouble, and she said, yes, you are. You are going to have an enormous difficulty fitting in with women for whom the whole be all and end all is home and family and looking beautiful, and spending money, and getting your hair done.

*Q: I tell you one advantage, you don't need much vocabulary.*

PELTIER: Well. I suppose there is that. I'd think it would drive you out of your living gourd because the gossip, in general, is such, you've probably lived in much the same thing. All they talk about is whom is going with whom and all the rest. We'll see what happens.

*Q: The way I got around that in Brazil was I wrote a cookbook, because the people in Recife would spend hours expounding on what they had for dinner. So I started going to cocktail parties and dinner parties with a little notepad and a pen in my pocket. And I was constantly scribbling and everything and I put together a cookbook, because it hadn't been done before in English and Portuguese on the Afro-Brazilian dishes from Bahia, which I guess if there is a distinctive Brazilian cuisine, that would be, although there are regional dishes, the most distinctive Brazilian cuisine is this Afro-Brazilian dishes based on palm oil, the things that the slave cooks brought over from Dahomey and what have you. That is the way I kept my sanity. It was lovely. I had a title, I was the consuleza. It's the only time I ever had a title. Everything we did was written up in the society pages. I clipped them out and put them with the photographs. The photographs don't relate to the article, but we were doing what the photographs while the articles little squibs were written about us. And I made, one young reporter was assigned to Guido's right hand woman, and he called Lucia several times a week to find out where we were, what we were doing, where we were going, and I made him promise that he would write and say that we were going somewhere but that he would write and say that we were back, because at that point our guards had been disarmed. They had holsters, but no weapons. And I didn't want*

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*anyone to be able to pick up the 'Diario de Pernambuco, and realize that the guards were there alone, unarmed. And he abided by that. But if I hadn't gotten involved in the Instituto Joaquim Nabuco, who was an abolitionist, Instituto Joaquim Nabuco for Social Studies, and it's more than a cookbook. Each recipe has a little social or historical or in some cases, I must admit, fabricated little note about it. Fabricated from my own experience. That is how I kept my sanity.*

PELTIER: Well, I'm sure as they say there are niches everywhere and heaven knows... I used to say, if I could keep myself busy in Manila for two years, with the incredible number of people trying to keep busy, I could find something everywhere. And I find too, I don't know when your children went away to school, we've had ours with us always, because again now there are American schools everywhere, and mercifully, Alec's jobs have been taking him to progressively larger and larger posts, where they are, and peers and the whole deal. And they've never had to go to foreign schools and never to boarding school. So, I think, as I say, this is probably the last post where that will happen and then we'll have one in college and I think the other one might as well to go off to seek her fortune as well. We'll see what happens, where we get sent.

*Q: She'll go to prep school or something? [Yeah] So that they can be, well, I sent, we sent our two up here to be together and they never saw each other. One was at Bradford and the other was at Deerfield and I think they got together twice in a year.*

PELTIER: Yeah, it's difficult. But it's better that they're not so far away. There is a phone call if you're hurting and you need somebody. It's very true and that's probably what we would want to do. But, having them at home, I've been doing Girl Scouts for nine years and I think I've finally grown out of that, but we'll see. And so kid stuff you find is always portable, Girl Scouts is portable, you can always go on class trips, be room mothers. And that's why I say it's a suburban existence revolving around kids and school, and the bus, and the rest of it, shopping. And the similarities are marked. Which is very different from what it was in 1935 or 1945 or 1955.

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*Q: So, really, the 1972 directive didn't make any great difference in your life.*

PELTIER: It might have in that I could no longer, apparently, be called on to do something that nobody had ever asked me to do yet. You see, Alec had entered the Foreign Service in 1967 and didn't have a true Foreign Service post, because Vietnam did not count, until, oh late 1970. So there I was, baking brownies and turning up at a very ... you know Bombay was not a very large post. It was run by a Foreign Service Officer who had been there, or been in the Foreign Service for something like 42 years when he retired. His wife was a very reasonable woman and so there was no horrifying demands. We had no kids at the time so no demand seemed particularly horrifying. We were told that there were two seats at his cultural series, I won't say concert, because sometimes it was lectures and sometimes it was art, and Mrs. Braddock insisted that those seats be filled. Well, we had a very mundane social life, we're not out, out, out all the time, and we had no kids, so fine, why not? So a couple times a month we were off to occupy the seats. And I thought, isn't this grand. And two or three of the other wives at post would say, have they called you to go to those awful things and I didn't know what to say, because I was having a good time, but I didn't want to let the side down. I was very young. Oh, well, yeah, we've had to go, it was all right. What are you going to say. So, as I say, until they left, we just went along. And Bombay is so civilized. Have you ever been to India? The concerts, and lectures, and plays, and all that kind of thing, happen at seven-o'clock.

Well, you're out of the hall by nine. You go have one of those late Indian dinners, you're home and in bed by ten. It's perfect. None of this go home, eat, change, try and get back downtown. Everybody just goes straight from the office. Marvellously convenient. So, if they happened on Tuesday you were still in bed promptly. So, then out came the 1972 directive and enormous sighs of relief from people around me, who had been doing this longer. I felt literally, and I say this over and over again, that I had been done out of my job. I had married this man and I had looked forward to entertaining, to being the right sort of wife and assisting the career and the rest, but here was this thing that said, sorry,

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you're no longer needed. I was unemployed. And I can't say, gee, I never got over it, I have a perfectly fine time. What was necessary, the entertaining still had to be done and the brownies still had to be baked, but the ConGen at that point was really pretty funny, because he read the directive to all the officers in a staff meeting. That means that we can no longer count on your spouses for representational assistance, but on February 22 we will be having our usual bash for national day, which was held in February because it didn't rain, it rained in July. And I want each of you to take three of the boxes of brownie mix that you will find in the box outside the door and take them home and make them and bring them back tomorrow. Well, of course what the men did was take the boxes of brownie mix home and give them to us. We made them.

*Q: That's a lovely story, a marvelous story. What was the consul general's name?*

PELTIER: Bane. David Morgan Bane. A very suave gentleman. And he had a very stylish wife. And the Braddocks were very sweet people. They'd been around a long time and she didn't have as much style and the joint hadn't been done over in four or five years. So when Mrs. Bane got there, absolutely back to the walls, top to bottom, decorated it beautifully, and showed up for national day in silver lamé top to toe. Really dressed the joint up. B-a-i-n, possibly with an 'e'.

*Q: We'll look him up. What do you think? Where's the future? As you say, you're a dying breed. We have tandem couples. We have male dependent spouses. We have, what do we have? We have single officers, a lot of single officers.*

PELTIER: More I think, God knows, there are more single parents around. Delhi was just full of them, and the woods was thicker and thicker because physically it was ideal. There was a compound that was right between the embassy and the schools, so the kids could run back and forth. And there was the pool and the club there and the parents were in the office. They ran riot, just like they do in any suburban setting. And there were the usual problems with the ones who got into the booze and the ones that ran off with

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other peoples' motorbikes, and so forth. But, on the surface it looked like the perfect place to go because there was care for infants, and so forth and so on. Where we're going, it's an interesting question. But, as far as I think that now that the position of Family Liaison Officer, Community Liaison Officer, Embassy Liaison officer, they seem to have all these terms, now that that has become institutionalized, the need for us dinosaurs can be redirected, in that we can put effort there. Because all the same kind of people who picked up the pieces, and who have been carrying the ball for a thousand years, from Abigail Adams on down. Now, you've been a Family Liaison officer, I was asked to do it in New Delhi, and I said, no way, Jose. But people with your knowledge and skill at being a Foreign Service wife now have an office to put it into. And there's a terrific need because, stop me if I'm wrong, but watching that job in New Delhi, which is the first time we'd been at a post with one, I was struck with the possibility for burn-out, because you're everybody's auntie. If your husband beats you, or drinks, or your kid is on drugs, or you are so upset mentally, you just don't know whether you're coming or going, you want to find a sewing group, little problems, big problems, no problems, too many problems get dumped in your lap. And, I think it gets to the point where a year and a half is it, please.

*Q: I think that the problem there, unless you were a trained psychologist or psychiatrist, or a social worker, you have to know how far to get involved. We had a small post. There were three families with children, I believe. There were three or four, there were six children, sometimes eight children. Well, I looked at those children and I thought they were very well cared for by their parents. They went off to karate lessons in starched uniforms and they had computer lessons and piano lessons. I thought, if anything, they were over-programed. They were taken to the beach. They were let stay up all night for steel band concerts, and what have you. So I really thought the children were being cared for in the parents' own individual way of caring for them. I didn't think there was any abuse or neglect or anything. And the one divorce experience I had was one woman who came in and said, give me the name of the legal section, in the legal section in Washington. So I made my first call to Washington, I think I have a potential divorce case here and*

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*they gave me the names, all very confidential and everything. And I went in to see, and she was working in the visa section at the time, and I went in and gave the list to her and she said, ha!, same old list they gave me in Tel Aviv. So that was ... and there was an embassy nurse [who] was well schooled in public health. And there was a psychiatrist who did get a job on the outside, so if anything really got sticky I ... So I turned my efforts to the singles. Because they were the ones sitting there with nothing to do and no spouse to get out and find out what was happening in Trinidad. To take them along on a weekend.*

PELTIER: There was that in spades in New Delhi, because they were usually given housing on the compound, which is very convenient, but terribly limiting, you have no idea where you are living. And you have a maid to do the shopping. So finding out anything in New Delhi is very, well, Indian society is based on the family and so, an unattached woman is an anomaly. In Indian society, I know you are aware, you're married to somebody, or you're their aunt or their sister or their daughter. And because of all this you have a place. And I had to smile when my sister came to visit and we had to travel around, now at last I feel like a real Indian family traveling around because we have the aunt. You don't travel father, mother and the kids, you have the aunt, grandmother or somebody with you. So it just seemed a little more right. But, where was I, oh, right. The singles again, have a tremendous problem with getting to know the country and traveling around. And that's where the American Women's Club helped out was with the traveling. There was a couple of gals who loved to travel and so they made arrangements with travel agents and sent tours off about once a month to Kashmir, to Goa, to these caves, to Benares and Calcutta and so forth. And that was a big help. But I think it's outside of western Europe and maybe some other societies that are set up the same way, it's very difficult for a single person to get out and be accepted and then invited back.

*Q: And then in addition to that if you've worked all week in the embassy from nine to five, and people didn't have maids in Trinidad, because Trinidad has the highest cost of living in the Western Hemisphere, the Cayman Islands has a higher cost, but we have no mission there, so for all practical purposes Trinidad was. There was no maid to go out and do the*

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*shopping and the cleaning and the laundry, so they spent the weekend gathering around the pool of their apartment complexes. So, I tried to set up things that would get them out for a few hours anyway, get them involved in Carnival and things like that.*

PELTIER: That's very, very needed. So what is going to happen, as I say, I feel it's what used to be taken care of by those with the time and inclination is being institutionalized, which I think is a good thing. It's more central and most posts seem to be growing, not if from a Foreign Service point of view, the commercial service, the, I don't know, INS now has somebody out in Delhi. AID grows and grows and contracts, anyway there are so many more people to serve, and I think it's a good thing. And perhaps somehow, the Foreign Service will provide not only the office, but the training for the people who are in it. And again, I don't know, it seems to me there's a lot of seat of the pants operation. You know what's necessary and listened to people's trouble often enough so you can do some of that. You know there's a psychiatrist, but there's probably room for more training. But again that lines everybody up, so perhaps the freedom that... I often thought that that 1972 directive took away a lot of freedom, because then people had this onus of, now, well, what am I going to do with myself, instead of being pushed hither and yon and using up the stray hours, they had weeks of stray hours.

*Q: I think it was particularly hard on those older women who had paid their dues for years and years and finally got up to being the wife of the principal officer...*

PELTIER: Where they could say, now it's time for the balloon booths and the rest and they couldn't call on you.

*Q: But I felt that you should retrench and do what you could do. Because if they had taken your support away from you...*

PELTIER: Squashed the balloon booth.



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*Q: Exactly. And we did that in Recife, we said, you simply cannot import thousands of dollars worth of American goods because there are too few of us, and we'll scratch the American booth and we'll come and support all the other booths. Which is what we did. And the people who were upset were the people who went ahead and did the booth anyway when they didn't want to.*

PELTIER: When you talk about the improvements in Foreign Service life, and I'm sure you know about them, because you were in the Foreign Service [not] much that much ahead of me, and have talked to ladies who were ahead of you. The benefits there are now, and the ease with which things are accomplished is, maybe I'm an anomaly, but I think we've been very, very well taken care of and, as I say, perhaps one of the reasons it took so long is, ladies don't yell, you put up a stiff upper lip, you put up a good front and you just make do. So, perhaps newer people coming along saying, I don't like this, maybe they made a difference.

*Q: I always felt that we were well taken care of. We always were a little out of pocket for education for fourteen years, but that was to send our children to schools rather than have them go to a DOD school. We sent them to the American School of Tangiers, that had a very good reputation in some ways as an American overseas school. We were always a little out of pocket, but we didn't suffer. Now, I really don't know, you're facing 19-20,000 dollar college tuitions on the horizon. You should be able to save for those.*

PELTIER: Well, there's a whole other way. One should be able to save. There's a whole other way of approaching that, too. In that I don't expect to have \$60,000 ready in three years time to be able to say, okay kid, off you go. Here's the money, off you go. We've taken the other approach that the savings has gone into the house as much as anything else, because there's a new thing called a home equity loan. And the way things are set up now, of course, you're going to have to take a loan, but again, growing up, finding your financial feet in a time of great inflation and rising salaries, loans are, you take it for



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everything and we've never bought anything but houses on credit. You know, Alec goes and writes a check for the car and the washer and the dryer and the rest of it.

*Q: How many people live that way in the Service though? I wonder.*

PELTIER: Well, that's what's so extraordinary, when you move, yes, your savings takes a real bang in the ear. And I was fascinated as time went on and Visa cards, specifically Visa and Mastercards became more common, and instead of talking about getting a loan from the parents or dipping into the savings, people were talking about, well, we still have this much left on the Visa card and we only have to pay that off twenty bucks a month, so that's [what] you do, until after six months, you work up to that and then you pay it all off. You know, that's the way it's done. These people also suffer terribly from delayed mail services because they don't get their bill and the Visa starts to get very stroppy and say, you owe it all right now.

*Q: And what is it eighteen per cent?*

PELTIER: Minimum. Some of them are twenty-one now.

*Q: Gosh, I'm not New England, but I'm much too thrifty for that kind of...*

PELTIER: Exactly. So when interest is tax-deductible, the year we bought a house was the first year we ever got a refund on the tax thing, and it's been that way ever since. You know it's completely turned over the whole thing to being a householder. So, that's when we began to understand the problem that if you cannot deduct the interest on loans how much more it costs you. As say there is a strategy. I don't know about other families in this day and age. I have been taught some things recently in college that I think are a bunch of hooey, and one of the bunches of hooey is the fact that the extended family is dead. Now, I understand that there are circumstances and circumstances, but I am blessed with an absolutely immense family. My husband's family is microscopic, but it's there. His mother and his father and his aunts and his uncles are there. And I have always known from the

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word go that there is help there. Whether it is the fact that you need a weekend away from school and your parents are on the west coast so an aunt [will] say, come on along, or whether it's financial or whether it's that kind of thing, there is assistance around. And I think there is, I like to think there's more of that than sticks out in all these articles you read about, what are you going to do about college, do you realize this is going to have to, blah, blah, blah.

*Q: And then of course you're going to have a college loan to pay off...*

PELTIER: Then you're going to retire.

*Q: Well, no. Then you have to help them with the downpayment on their first house. It doesn't end at twenty-one and graduation anymore. It goes on into other realms. The Foreign Service with family assistance certainly has made it, we only have two children, now if you had five or six, maybe it's ... I don't know.*

PELTIER: It doesn't matter what you do if you have five or six, you have more problems down the line.

*Q: Yes. And you should think about that in this day and age before you have five or six children. Of course our young are doing that.*

PELTIER: Well I was very rude to, at a cocktail party last week in Massachusetts, a very sweet lady came up and said, well, how have you managed your family with this moving around that you do? And I said, kept it small. And then I said, oh well, I'm not trying to be rude, but what I mean is you can move two, you can live anywhere, keep them together, you know, it makes it easier. Keep 'em portable. She was leading up to a problem with her son and his new wife and her kids and their kids, and what were they to do and all that. It sounded terribly complicated to me. But it was keep it small. Knowing people who couldn't go to post X or Y because there was no housing for people with six children, and the fact

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that their vacations were very short and very close to home because you can't buy eight plane tickets for the price of four.

Well, just looking at this list, the only one that I have no reaction to is Indonesian invading Portuguese Timor. I'm afraid they're still starving, well, also, they weren't putting it in their own papers. And that was the horrifying thing, Indira Gandhi was shot, October 31, 1984 and we stayed indoors for four days, thank God the Christmas presents had arrived, we just opened Trivial Pursuit and played it for four days. And the kids got very good at it. So I can tell you what I was doing then and the cook downstairs was a terrible rumormonger, so he would go out and come back and tell the kids these awful, awful atrocities, until, finally, I just told them, you don't go near him anymore. You know what he says. The papers and the television and the radio would admit that there was some problems, but things were tense but calm and so forth. And you could see fires around the horizon and you knew there was a curfew and you knew that your Sikh neighbors were no longer in their houses because their houses were dark, there wasn't a taxi to be seen. But I, I have no imagination, gee, you look up and down the street, looks calm here, I guess it's calm. And then about two weeks later, our U.S. edition of Newsweek arrives with a four page color spread of the fires, of the bloody bodies in the street. My, God, is this what was going on? Was this what Radio Australia was trying to tell me? Because our radio and the Russian radio are on the same frequency, so you can very seldom get anything out of either one. So, it was a beautiful example of, oh, and the Tribune wasn't coming in, because they just shut the gates on that one, because when they have communal trouble in that country, they don't talk about it, hoping it will go away, not wishing to incite more, so I was one of the few ladies with a diplomatic license plate on the car, so for the next week, I took people out for grocery shopping at the commissary, and I took the kids to school and picked them up, because all the Sikh school drivers were still off in the villages and they weren't coming back. But outside of that, that's all you can really think of.

And I can remember Mrs. Thatcher's election, because, Parliament opens in November and it's pouring with rain and you don't take little children to stand in the rain to watch

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the parade go by, but this was in May, and the sun was shining, so I guess they took the kindergarten, and Tasha was in the kindergarten, she was the older one. So, I said I will help with the kindergarten if I can bring the nursery schooler. Oh, of course. So, off we went and the Queen went by and waved at us and I went back to the nursery schooler and said, okay, we can leave now, the Queen has waved at us. So, I remember that day very well and we were gone by the time she was relected and it did startle us, the majority she got, but I think she's made enough people very comfortable and they're the ones who vote. The disaffected don't vote and don't think it's because they can't in that country, because, as I say, this nice Pakistani gentleman kept trying to sign us up each year. The third time he came around, he said, oh, you people again, that's right you just don't, and went away. Because he had to canvass a huge area and he would forget. There was the Indo-Pakistani War, we were in Bombay. Nothing happened, but there was one couple, young, who's parents I don't think had ever gone beyond their state boundary, much less out of the United States, and they would watch the six-o'clock news and believe it whole. I mean who was it, David Brinkley and Chet Huntley were giving it to them, it was obviously gospel truth, so, they called up, and it was about two-thirty or three when you're really awake, are you all right? What? Well, Bombay's burning, it says so on the TV. Well, let me look. My friend goes to the window and looks out, she's only two stories up, no, there's no fires, what's up? Well, they said Bombay is burning. From Dadar to the sea there have been terrible, terrible air raids. Well, not here, Mom, they have sirens and we have blackout, well, no, don't worry Mom, something's wrong. And it turned out the following day, the U.S. press, it became a famous story, had been completely snookered by something the Pakistan army had put out. You know there's misinformation that we have bombed Bombay and cut the water, and this was a very big worry. There was one, at that time, one, and now there are three, and they're all in the same place, one big water pipe coming into the peninsula, to bring water to seven million people. And a bat would fly by in the wrong place and all the anti-aircraft in the whole world would take off and people would be killed from all the shrapnel coming down through the roof, but never mind, they defended the water pipe.

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Oh, the one really successful social activity that we ever had was a New Year's Day brunch. The blackout restrictions just destroyed the Christmas social season, it got dark early, at about five-thirty, and nobody wanted to go around, nobody could go around after ten, so we invited thirty-five people to brunch, and we fed fifty-seven, because everybody had all these house guests and the rest and nobody had been out to anything. We had a two bedroom flat with one room, actually it was big, about four times the size of this one, everybody squeezed in. And that was where having the servants was so great, because we had planned for forty and rounded up dishes and food and stuff from the neighbors and brought in an extra cook. And the two cooks just looked at the situation and they'd just gone up and down the back stairs rounding up more plates, more eggs, more...you know, the rest. Everybody had the stuff in the freezers. And I just carried on and then next day the cook came to me and said, now we owe them a dozen eggs and them a bunch of sausage and them three loaves of bread. But I didn't have to worry about it at the party because more plates just happened on the table, and more food happened. The trouble was he was an alcoholic and we couldn't keep him, but that, as I say, was a vast social success. Everybody stayed. We called it for eleven and the last person left at eight.

*Q: Oh, my goodness, well, you obviously made everyone's Christmas that year.*

PELTIER: Well, exactly. The new year came in... Then Washington was uneventful, I think I came to the District six times in three years. Very little use for it because the Girl Scouts and all the rest of it was happening and everything in McLean. That's kind of an interesting list.

*Q: Well, I really appreciate... I'll show you the list that I... I think the only thing that I didn't cover in here that seemed applicable was that Abigail telling John that he was just as good as they, the Europeans, were, and morally, of course, he was certainly better. Isn't that great?*

PELTIER: That's the New Englander speaking.

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*Q: I guess we all, perhaps unconsciously, did have to let our children, no, not let them know that they were Americans. I'm surprised that my children grew up as American as they did. They never went to school here. They went to school, my daughter went to first grade, then she went to fourth and fifth grade then she didn't come back until she went to Bradford. And my son went to first and second grade and didn't come back until he went to Deerfield. And when I look at it in retrospect, I must have had two pretty solid little kids, to drop him in Deerfield? And drop one in Bradford, you know, Ruthie came with her Moroccan blanket for her bed and her sheepskin...*

PELTIER: Bradford was particularly welcoming, though, because we had a lot of foreign students, you know, speaking from a student's point of view. So there was nothing weird, it was exotic, and were lumped in with the foreign students sometimes, but there was no hostility, and there was no shut out because of it, if you see what I mean. There are other, well, when my daughter went to fourth grade and she was the only new student in that fourth grade, in McLean, I think that's very unique. Usually there's a tremendous turnover but that year there hadn't been at all. And it took her a while to settle in, and part of it was that, even here, where a lot of foreign students are and a lot of foreign returned Americans are, she was considered odd with her English accent and her funny view of life. I think Bradford or almost any boarding school is much more welcoming, or much more willing to take whatever you are and make you feel more comfortable.

*Q: I must admit, I've never understood people who are pining to get back here to put their children in a large school like Bethesda-Chevy Chase, not that they're not going to get a good education there, because I'm sure they will, but to bring back a Foreign Service child who has been, well... There was one point when my children were chauffeured to school by the consul general's chauffeur, so that we could study Dutch with him in the morning, and things like that. And to drop a child like that in a big American school, I always considered it a disservice, and maybe without knowing it, we did the right thing*

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*by keeping them. But they do grow up as elitist, our children did anyway, now whether children do today, they might.*

PELTIER: They still do. Only I call it being a snob.

*Q: Well, I don't think mine are snobs.*

PELTIER: It's not cripplingly so, it's just a realization, especially on the part of our oldest one, of the strength she has [as] a result of living overseas and confronting India, I won't say other cultures, I'll say India because it's much more to the point, her younger sister it's going to be very interesting to see how she relates to Mexico because she loathed India and never changed her mind. She just thought the whole scene of the crowding and the filth were not for her. She had her friends and her activities and was very happy in school, we'll see if Mexico makes a difference.

*Q: I have one like your older one, who realizes that he's gained immensely from being in the Foreign Service. I have another one, and this is partly family heritage from my husband's side, she went right into the Peace Corps, and really has sort of lived a Peace Corps existence for the last ten, twelve years, and now, suddenly, is coming to Washington as an attorney's wife. It will be curious to see how it goes. You would never know that she had been to Bradford. You would never know that she spoke French. You would never know that she had been a diplomat's daughter at all. She buys her clothes at the Goodwill.*

PELTIER: You find that in every family. They kind of deny where they've come from and, I used to watch my cousins do this, and some of us followed right along in our parents' footsteps and some of us went off on a tangent. You get the same place in the end.

*Q: Well, I think so. They haven't sold their house in Texas because they say, oh, we're only going to try Washington for a couple of years and we want to come back here.*

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*Because that was the longest — my son-in-law is military — that was the longest either of them had ever lived in one spot. They have roots there.*

PELTIER: So, they have roots there. What I found interesting when we came in, and you probably found this too, is how fast and easy it is to put roots down in this area, because there are so many people doing exactly the same thing. You are not an anomaly, you go to church, oh, the Smiths were in India, probably the same time you were, and so, that there is an instant, oh, you can come to the Girl Scout meeting, you don't know what all those other ladies, oh, yeah, she's in the Foreign Service, oh, yes, we've lived all over everywhere, oh, yeah, we do this, that. It's a very welcoming atmosphere. It's a little different to Keocoke. I understand that Albuquerque is particularly difficult. But anyway, that's where we are.

*Q: We find, of course in this neighborhood, we have a very strong citizen's association to fight developers and high rises, so that's what draws this group together. You know, they defeated the highway years ago and now they're keeping the height down and the facades historic.*

PELTIER: The minute you own a place and your neighbors have a cause, you join in. We still take the Fairfax Journal to keep up with the zoning and where the roads are going because we live, you can almost throw a stone from Tyson's Corner to our house, and I mean literally, physically and so you'd better believe that line, and all year, every year it's threatened, so we're constantly signing petitions and making noises. But joining in something like that, you put down these almost instant roots.

*Q: There we get back to our home ownership and having something that is ours to come home to. Having a rental home.*

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## BIOGRAPHIC DATA



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Spouse's name: Alec. Date entered Service: 6/67 Left Service: N/A

Posts: 1968-69 Saigon, Vietnam (Alec) 1968-69 Manila, Philippines (Catherine)  
1970-73 Bombay, India 1973-75 Medan, Indonesia 1975-77 Bridgetown, Barbados  
1977-81 London, England 1981-84 Washington, DC 1984-87 New Delhi, India 1987 -Mexico  
City, Mexico

Status: Spouse of FSO

Date and place of birth: New York City, October 2, 1946

Maiden Name: Morgan, 7-times great granddaughter Abigail & John Adams

Schools:

Concord Academy, 1964

Bradford College

Occidental College

George Mason University, 1984

Date and place of marriage: Stonington, Connecticut, August, 19 1967

Children: 2 daughters ages 15 and 12

Profession: Homemaker

Positions held at post and in Washington: Manila, reader at blind school, volunteer  
English teacher/tutor; Bombay, AWC Newsletter editor, Ways & Means chairman. London,  
Embassy Association Newsletter editor, Girl Scout leader; New Delhi, AWA Newsletter

## Library of Congress

editor, Girl Scout leader, wrote Embassy newcomer handbook (paid), reader at blind school. DC, Girl Scout leader, student, neighborhood lake cleanup chair.

Honors: Winslow R. Hatch award in history at George Mason University, 1984

End of interview